



Early 50s—Billy Cunningham (Brakeman); Teddy Holmes (Driver)

Photo Courtesy Teddy Holmes

Coaster Evolution

Back in 1910, Oliver Brown and Ed Wallace, after watching youngsters riding wagons down the side canyons in Bisbee, hit upon the idea of starting a race from the top of the Divide to downtown.

The first race was run in 1910 and brought the entire town to cheer for the “racers”. The rules were few and in addition to a rough road, there were streetcar tracks to avoid along Tombstone Canyon. It was indeed a thriller. The winners received prizes from local merchants.

With more youngsters entering the race, regulations became necessary. The starting line was moved off the mountain divide to Tombstone Canyon at Sims Road and the Pump House. With the advent of paving the canyon in the 30s and the disappearance of the streetcar tracks, it made all the difference in fewer hazards and greater speeds.

After World War II, several returning veterans thought it would be fun to enter the race. One of these men, Teddy Holmes, with his partner Buck Woods, decided that airplane wheels with ball bearings were the only way to go. Reese Clark designed and built several coasters for these guys. After using them in the adult race, they would be loaned out for the kids’ race. This way, youngsters would have a chance to capture five dollars for crossing the finish line.

The team of Holmes and Wood made it down the course in less

than two minutes, making them the fastest two-man team event to go down the canyon, reaching speeds in excess of seventy miles an hour. As kids, they won races and now as adults they were flying. In the early 50s, starting fourth in the race, Holmes and Wood passed two coasters and were attempting to pass the third coaster

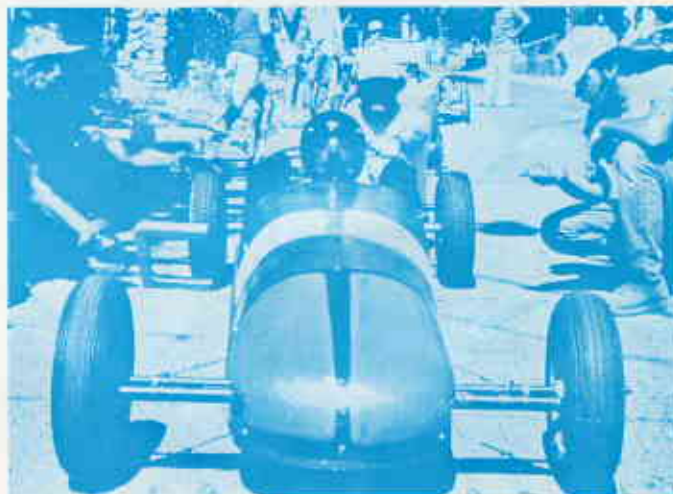


Photo Courtesy Richard Byrd